

that they can meet those goals. I believe that this bill does both.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1 authorizes \$24 billion in funding for our national kindergarten through 12th grade education programs, a 29 percent increase over the current fiscal year, much more than the funding levels provided by President Bush's own budget.

The bill doubles title I funds over the next 5 years to \$17.2 billion, and it includes real support for teacher training.

I am reminded, 2 years ago when then-Vice President Al Gore was in my district and we were talking about school construction, we asked a young student about 12 years old what was the most important thing she was looking forward to in her classroom and she said, well, everybody knows, Congresswoman, that the quality of the teacher is the most important thing for a child to learn.

I am excited that we are doing something about teacher training. This bill also removes provisions diverting funds from public schools, whatever the newest name for them are, including private school choice. Vouchers do not support the vast majority of the students in the United States.

I am reluctant to support some parts of this legislation, but, overall, I am very proud of the work that my fellow members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce have done. And I commend both the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for having made this bill possible, because truly without both gentlemen, this would not have gotten done.

Today, the House has a rare opportunity to get some real work done, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT).

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for yielding the time.

Let me first thank the gentleman for all the hard work he has done in putting together a truly bipartisan education bill.

Mr. Chairman, I would request that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) enter into a colloquy with me.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NETHERCUTT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. I would be happy to do so.

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time. I come before the House today to draw the gentleman's attention and the attention of the Committee on Education and the Workforce to the Star Schools program. I believe the Star Schools program has served students in my district and throughout the country very well.

The Star Schools program is a distance-learning network which gives

students the opportunity to take classes they have never had before.

As many of my colleagues know, many small, rural and underserved urban school districts cannot afford to hire teachers to offer a wide variety of classes.

In small school districts, distance-learning programs are often the only opportunity students have to take advanced math and science or foreign language classes necessary to apply to college. Underserved urban school districts are often unable to find or afford qualified teachers to offer students unique and upper level courses.

The distance-learning programs offer a cost-effective way to level the playing field for all students, offering them the opportunity to take the same classes as their peers in larger and better-funded schools.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) for bringing this to my attention and talking about the importance of distance learning.

I believe strongly that distance learning is an important tool for many local school districts and students. And for this reason, this legislation places strong emphasis on distance-learning programs in the education technology grant program.

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Chairman, I visited STEP Star, which is the distance-learning program operated by Educational Service District 101 in my own 5th District of Washington. Their program is very impressive. STEP Star and all Star Schools programs provide an irreplaceable education resource to our rural school districts. STEP Star, which is partially funded through the Star Schools program, has made it possible for students in rural school districts, in my district and around the country, to take a variety of classes from a live teacher, whom they can interact with and ask questions of.

Outside of the class hour, programs like STEP Star allow students to talk with teaching staff. Online resources provide for instant exchange of electronic paperwork. Students can communicate with teachers and tutors through e-mail or participate in discussions with fellow classmates through bulletin boards.

So, once again, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his support of distance-learning programs; and I just ask that as he moves forward with this legislation, to keep in mind the importance of ensuring that distance-learning programs remain affordable to the most vulnerable students and school districts, rural, small, and underserved urban districts.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his comments and pledge to work with the gentleman on this and other programs as we get into the conference.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for yielding the time to me, and I commend him and the distinguished Members from California and Michigan, as well as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for their sincere effort to put together a bipartisan bill.

We are looking back now over the years of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Congress has amended, expanded, streamlined, revised the ESEA eight times creating programs to help migrant children, neglected and delinquent youngsters, limited English proficient students, and other special children.

Programs have been launched to enhance math and science instruction and rid the schools of drugs and violence. Smaller ESEA programs have been created to advance school desegregation, stimulate educational innovation and achieve other important purposes.

However, the face of American education has changed in many ways over the past 30 years. One way it is changing right now that has been addressed earlier but cannot be emphasized too much is that over the next 10 years, we will need to recruit, train and hire 2.2 million new teachers, 2.2 million, just to keep up with attrition and retirement.

Mr. Chairman, I would also say that success in the information age depends not just on how well we educate our children generally, but how well we educate them in math and science specifically.

The majority of these new teachers will be called on to teach math and science. I am proud to have served on the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching chaired by former astronaut and Senator John Glenn.

The Glenn Commission calls for major changes in the quality, quantity, and professional work environment of our math and science teachers.

Although not on the same scale as in the bill that the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and I produced from the Glenn Commission, this bill includes new math and science partnerships that mirror what we set out to do in the Glenn Commission. It is an excellent start on focusing the attention on math and science education.

The gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and I, also in committee, put together a bipartisan amendment to strengthen math and science partnerships.

Going farther, one of the main recommendations of the Glenn Commission was to establish regional academies that would recruit talented, mid-career professional and recent graduates in math and science teaching. Unfortunately, that recommendation is